

A *8.*
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the Meeting
OF THE
Sons of the Clergy
IN

S. Mary-le-Bow Church,
On Tuesday the Sixth of December, 1692.

By *EDWARD* Lord Bishop of Gloucester.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *T. M.* for *B. Aylmer* at the Three Pidgeons
over against the *Royal Exchange*, and *A. and J. Churchill*
at the Black Swan in *Pater-noster-row*, 1692.

The price of the same Dr Fowler.

1257:06

To his Honoured Friends, the
Stewards of the late Feast
O F
The SONS of the CLERGY, *Viz.*

Sir Salathiel Lovel, Recorder of London,

Thomas Paske, Esq;

Mr. Thomas South,

Mr. John Reeve,

Mr. Samuel Knowles,

Mr. John Thresher,

Capt. John Willimott,

Capt. Abraham Robarts,

Mr. Robert French,

Mr. Francis Sedgwick,

Mr. Robert Sedgwick,

Mr. Thomas Granger,

Capt. Theoph. Blechynden,

Alexander Duncomb, Esq;

Mr. John Dillingham.

Gentlemen,

THO' I was not difficultly perswaded
to comply with your Request,
that I would be your Preacher,
as little Time, as I *truly* foresaw I should
be Master of, to prepare a Discourse
proper for the Occasion; yet I could

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The Epistle Dedicatory.

not consent to your desire of having *this*, which you heard, *Printed* (as really not thinking it worthy to be made more publick) till you were pleased to back it with such Importunities, as I could not withstand, without the imputation of Incivility. I therefore here Present you with it, most earnestly wishing, and humbly praying, it may do that Service, which your Zeal for the promoting of Love and Good Works induced you to think it fitted for, and remain,

GENTLEMEN,

*Your Affectionate Brother, and
Humble Servant,*

E. G.

JOHN 13. 34.

*A New Commandment I give unto you,
That ye love one another ; as I have
loved you, that ye also love one another.*

THE Design of this Meeting of the **Sons of the Clergy** being to promote Love and Amity among our selves, and to exercise Christian Charity, I think *these* Words are no improper Subject to be discoursed on upon this Occasion.

A New Commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another. A New Commandment ! Was Love to each other no Duty before the coming of our Blessed Saviour ? Was it never enjoined under the Old Law ? Our Lord himself assures us of the contrary, *Mark 12. 31.* As in the foregoing Verse, he saith, that the Love of *God* comprêhends the whole *first* Table, so in *this*, that the Love of our *Neighbour* is the Sum and Substance of the *Second* : *The Second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* And we find the Duty of loving our Neighbour, often repeated and inculcated in the Old Testament.

The New Commandment therefore was not, that

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we should merely *Love one another*, but that we should *Love one another*, as *Christ hath loved us*. A *New Commandment I give unto you*, That ye *love one another*; as *I have loved you*, that ye also *love one another*. We have in the Words,

First, A Duty enjoyed, viz. *Loving one another*.

Secondly, The Pattern we are to follow in so doing, *As I have loved you*. And in the handling of them I shall observe *this Method*.

I. I shall shew, What it is to *Love one another*.

II. The Necessity of so doing.

III. How far this Phrase *One Another* is to extend.

IV. What Qualifications our Love to each other ought to have.

V. In what Instances it ought to be expressed.

First, What it is to *Love one another*. The Word *Love* signifies either *Complacency*, or *Benevolence* and *Good Will*. And it is our Duty to *Love one another*, according to *both* these Acceptations of the Word, though not every individual Person, according to both. Some we are obliged to Love Complacentially, to take
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Delight and Pleasure in them; but there are *others*, whom we are not bound so to Love; nay whom we are bound *not* so to Love.

Some we can not so Love though we *would*; and there are *others* whom we *may* not so Love, though we *could*. For instance, *Churlish Nabals*, *People of Sour, Morose, or Captious Tempers*, to whom scarce a free Word can be spoken, without danger of Offence: We cannot Love these with a Love of *Delight*, though we would never so fain. To whom may be added *Narrow-soul'd People*, who have no Concern for *any* but their own dear Selves; and much more such as make no Conscience of *injuring* others to serve themselves. As Good natur'd People can take no satisfaction in such as *these*, so can hardly any of these, be pleas'd with the Society of *one another*: Especially, *Proud, or Envious, or Churlish, or Testy and Waspish People*, are no Company for *one another*; and much less for those, who are of *contrary Qualities*; Similitude being the Foundation of all Love of Complacency. Tho' where there is Similitude there may be no such Love, *viz.* when it lyeth in unlovely and troublesome Qualities; yet wheresoever there is such a Love, there must be more or less Similitude: And according to the *degree* of Similitude, will be the degree of Complacential Love.

Again, if such a Person be sensible, that such a one

Hates him, and watcheth all Occasions to do him Mischief, he cannot have this kind of Love for him.

Now when I say that *some* we can take no Complacency in, I suppose that therefore we are not obliged to it. *Nemo tenetur ad impossibile*. Nor is it agreeable to the Divine Goodness, to impose unnatural things on Men.

There are again *Others*, whom we may not Love with this Love of Delight, though we *could*: Namely, *Prophane* or *Debauched* People; those, who tho' they may have the *Form* of Godliness, deny in their Practice the *Power* thereof. The Apostle admonisheth his Son *Timothy*, to *withdraw himself* from such as *these*. To be pleased with the Conversations of such People, is to express a liking of their Ways; at least it argues a very Luke-warm Temper, and a great Unconcernedness for the Honour of God, and the Interest of Religion.

But no Man can be of so Unlovely a Temper, or so wicked a Wretch, as that it should not be our Duty to love him, in the *Second* Sense of the Word, viz. to *wish well* to him, and endeavour, as we have Opportunity, his Welfare and Happiness. Which supposeth, I need not say, a Change of his Nature, without which he cannot be capable of Happiness. And therefore this Change of his Nature is in the first place to be desired and endeavoured.

Secondly,

Secondly, As to the *Necessity* of Loving each other; there is no Duty more plainly enjoyned, or more vigorously urged in the Holy Scriptures: Especially by our Blessed Saviour and his Holy Apostles. And therefore those who are better acquainted with the Christian Religion, than with the Spirits and Behaviour of those who profess it, may think it needless to spend any time, upon *this* Argument. But because the Religion of too too many who are called Christians, and *that* Religion which our Saviour brought into the World, are very unlike, it will not be amiss to give a short Account what *this* is, in reference to the Point before us.

As our Blessed Lord calls it His *New Commandment*, *That we Love one another as He hath Loved us*; so in the Words following, he makes *this* the *distinguishing* Character of his Disciples. *By this*, saith he, *shall all men know that you are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another*. And so desirous was he that they should not be defective in Love, that above all the excellent Petitions he puts up for them *John 17*. this of Love is the only Grace, he particularly prays for in their behalf, *viz. ver. 21. That they all may be one as thou Father art in me and I in thee*; that they may be united in Love, have one Heart, and one Soul. And the Reason for which he thus prayeth, doth mightily Commend this Grace, *viz. That the World may believe that*

that thou hast sent me. Which is as much as to say, that Christians excelling in the Grace of Love, will be a great Conviction to the World, of the Excellency, and therefore of the *Truth*, of the Christian Religion. And again Verse the last, *I have declared, saith he, to them thy Name, and will declare it, that the Love wherewith thou hast Loved me, may be in them.* And his Beloved Disciple S. John thought, he could never enough extol this Grace. He makes Love the very Essence of the Deity, 1 Ep. 4. 16. *God is Love*; and adds, that *he who dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God and God in him.* And v. 7. he saith, that *Love is of God, and every one that Loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.* Knoweth him practically and experimentally. And Ch. 3. 14. *We know, saith he, that we have passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren:* We know that we are Regenerate Christians by our Love and Charity. *He that loveth not his Brother abideth in Death.* He is certainly an Unregenerate Man, a wicked Creature. And ver. 15. *Whosoever hateth his Brother is a Murtherer, and ye know that no Murther hath Eternal Life abiding in him.*

Nor is S. Paul wanting in Recommending and pressing this Duty. *Owe, saith he, no man any thing but to love one another; for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law.* Or this is the Christian Perfection of the Law, as it relates to our Neighbour. And in what fol.

follows he sheweth, that the whole second Table is herein implied. And in short, this great Apostle preferreth Charity before all other Endowments and Accomplishments: Before the *speaking with the Tongues of Men or Angels*, before *Gifts of Prophecy* and *Understanding all Mysteries*, before *all Knowledge*, and before *all Faith* too, even the *Faith of Miracles*; nay before the greatest Zeal, nay such a zeal as will make men *give their Bodies to be burnt*, 1 Cor. 13 chapter. He there tells us, that Charity is so much above all these, that they are none of them worth any thing without Charity. Much more may be said to shew, what a mighty Figure, this Duty of Loving each other makes, in the Religion of our Saviour.

Thirdly, I come to shew how far this duty of loving one another is to extend; or what we are to understand by one another in the Text. In a word, it takes in all Men whatsoever: Not only our Friends and Acquaintance: Not only our own Party, and those that say as we say, and think as we think: Not only those that oblige us and do us good turns; but all the World, all that partake of the same common Nature with our selves, be they *who* or *what* they will.

1. This is apparent from the Text. *A new Commandment I give unto you, That you love one another, as I have loved you.* Now the Love of Christ was Unlimited, He dyed for all mankind. S. John saith, that
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He is the Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World. S. Paul calls him, *The Saviour of all Men*: That is, so their Saviour as to exclude none from Salvation, who will comply with the Terms on which He offereth it. He hath shut out none from having benefit, by what he did and suffered in the behalf of Sinners; nor ever will he any, who shall not reject the Counsel of God against themselves. And lest we should think that by the *World*, and the *whole World*, and *all Men*, we are only to understand some of all sorts, this same Apostle assures us, that this Phrase *all Men* is to be taken in the same Latitude, in reference to the Remedy brought by *Christ*, that 'tis to be taken in, in reference to the Mischief done by *Adam*. Therefore as by the offence of one, saith he, judgment came upon all men to Condemnation, even so by the Righteousness of One, the free-gift came upon all men to Justification of Life; viz. the gift of the new Gracious Covenant. And the Author to the *Hebrews*, chap. 2. 9. tells us, that *Christ tasted death for every man*. Now if our Saviour loved *all men*, loved *all* so as to put them into a Reconcilable state; so that it must be their own Personal fault, and long of their Wilfulness and Obstinacy, if the worst of Sinners be not actually reconciled to God; then, since he hath commanded us to love others as He hath loved them, our Love is to extend to *all* without exception. And well might

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our Lord call this a *New Commandment*, for no such is to be found in the Law of *Moses*, or in the *Prophets*.

2. This farther appears from those *other words* of our Saviour, *Mark. 12. 31. Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*. You may say, the word *Neighbour* seems to be Limiting and Confining. But we must understand this word, as our Lord himself hath Explained it, *Luke 10. 29*. Here is a Question put by a Lawyer to Him, *Who is my Neighbour?* Now see His Answer in the following words: *A Certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his Rayment, and wounded him, leaving him half dead; and by chance there came a certain Priest that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side; and likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came, and looked on him, and passed by on the other side: But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him, he had Compassion on him, &c.* Now saith our Saviour, *v. 36. Which of these three, thinkest thou, was Neighbour to him that fell among thieves?* And the Lawyer answering, *He that shewed mercy on him;* Our Lord replied, *Go thou and do likewise.* Which is as if he had said, Thou hast now answered thy self; every Person that needs thy relief, tho' he be unto thee as *Jews and Samaritans* are to one another; tho' he be of a different Religion

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from thee, nay tho' he be thine *Enemy*, as the *Jews* and *Samaritans* were to each other, he is thy *Neighbour*; and therefore thou art obliged to *love him as thyself*; to do to *him*, when in an afflicted state, as *thou* wouldst be done unto in the like Condition. Again 'tis Evident,

3. That we are not to confine our Love and Charity to some particular Persons, in that we are farther required by our Saviour, to imitate our *Heavenly Fathers* Love and Charity. *Be Perfect*, saith he, as *your Heavenly Father is perfect*, *Mat. 5. 48*. That is, as appears from what goes before, let the exercise of *your* Charity extend as far as *God's* extendeth. For, as it follows *v. 45*. *He maketh His Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust*: And, as the *Psalmist* declareth, *His mercys are over all his works: The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercys are over all His works*. But,

4. *Express* Texts enjoyn *this*. If any are to be excluded from our Love, they must be our *Enemies*; but what saith our Lord of *these*, *Mat. 5. 44*? But *I say unto you Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven*. And *v. 46*. *If you love them which love you, what Reward have you? Do not even the*
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Publicans the same? And if you Salute, and embrace, your Bretheren only, what do you more than others? Or, what Excellent thing do you? Do not even the Publicans the same? And Gal. 6. 10. The Apostle saith, Let us do good unto all men; and the next words shew, that tho' we ought to love all without exception, as that word signifies Benevolence, yet we are not to shew neither this kind of love to all alike: For it follows, Especially to them who are of the Household of Faith. That which makes our Brother a Member of Christ's Church, doth give him a Title to our greater Affection in both the foresaid Senses. And here let me mind you, that we ought to have a higher degree of love, for all that own Christ for their Lord and Saviour, than for Infidels, and such as are Enemies to his Religion; and those that own him most in their Practice, we are obliged to have a greater love for, than for mere Professors of Christianity; or such as whose lives are less Conformable thereunto. 'Tis highly Reasonable, that the most Lovely Persons should have most of our love. There is nothing so Amiable as true Goodness, and according to the degree thereof in any Person; should be the degree of our Love to him. God is to be the Object of our Highest Love, because He is Perfectly and Originally Good; and according as Men are more or less like to God, the greater or less Complacency

ought we to take in them; and more or less ardently to Desire and Endeavour their Wellfare. The true Christian Love doth chiefly consist in loving *His* Image from whom we are call'd Christians: And where there is *most* of that, whether the Persons are in all things of our minds or no, we do not Love as becomes *Christians*, if *there* we do not *most* love.

I speak now of *Christian* Love, as I said, such a love as is the effect of our own *choice*, directed and Governed by our Saviour's Laws. I speak not of a *Natural* Love, which is *necessary*, and not the effect of Choice. This love do we what we can, will ordinarily flow most freely towards our *Tote-Fellows*, *Children*, *Brethren*, and *Sisters*, as being parts of our selves. And so for those that are Naturalized to us by a long Acquaintance, we cannot in *that* respect but love them better, than such as are less known to us; and those that have greatly *obliged* us, we naturally love with a greater Passion, than those to whom we are *not at all*, or *less* beholden.

But tho' *Scripture*, *Nature*, and *Reason* do enjoyn us to love one another with a different kind and degree of love, yet it hath been fully made to appear, that 'tis our duty to extend our love to *all*; to with well to, and desire and endeavour (as we are able and have opportunity) the happiness of every man.

Fourthly, I proceed to shew, what *Qualifications* our love

love to each other ought to have. Our Text tells us, that we ought to love one another as *Christ hath loved us*; and the other Text in *S. Mark*, that we are to love our Neighbour as our selves. And that is,

1. Most *Heartily* and *Sincerely*. My little Children, saith *S. John*, *Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in Deed and in Truth. Let love be without dissimulation*, saith *S. Paul*. I need not say that *Christ's* love to us was most hearty, nor that our love to our selves is so. Indeed, if our Love be not hearty, as we love not like *Christians*, so we do not love at all. Love is seated in the Heart only, so that *Professions* of love, and *love it self* are no more the same thing, than are *Shadows* and *Substances*, *Realities* and mere *Appearances*.

2. We ought to love *Ingenuously* as well as *Heartily*. To love Men *Ingenuously*, is to delight in them, or wish well to them, for their own sakes, without respect to our own Interest. So, you need not be told, our *Saviour* loved Mankind; next to the Glory of God, and the Advancement of Righteousness and Universal Goodness in the World, He was acted by a vehement desire of Our happiness. He did not *Love Men*, as men love their *Horses*, and too commonly their *Servants*, only or mostly for his own Advantage.

Now, as I said that to *Pretend* to love, is not to love,

love, so to love others merely with respect to our own good, is rather mere *self-love*, than a love of *them*. And to love others principally for our own sakes, is more to love *our selves* than *them*. And that such a love is far from deserving to be called *Christian Love*, will appear by what a *Pagan* saith of it. Tully tells us in his *Laelius*, that *Ipse se quisque deligit, non ut aliquam a seipso mercedem exigat Charitatis suae, sed quod per se sibi quisque Charus est, &c.* Every man loves himself, not that he may obtain a reward from himself for so doing, but because he is, for his own sake, dear to himself: And except (as he proceeds) men so love one another, they cannot be true Friends. And this (saith he farther) is seen in the very Brutes, how much more then ought it to be found among Men. But many Impudently desire that others should be such Friends to them, as they will be to none; and expect that love from others, which they will not bestow on others. That is, they expect that others should love them purely upon their own account, and not that their love to them, should Ultimately Terminate in themselves. And as the Example of our Saviour, so that of God the Father obligeth us thus to love one another. For Man cannot be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself. Is it any Pleasure, or Courtesy, to the Almighty, that thou art Righteous? &c. Job 22. 2, 3. And therefore he cannot desire, that Sinners should turn
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from their Wickedness and live, for any gain to himself. If therefore we would be the Children of God, we must love each other not only sincerely, but generously and ingenuously.

And indeed, if we consider the Nature of Mankind, we shall find that *this*, as well as the Commands of God and our Saviour, doth oblige us to such a love of all Men. And this, indeed, is the reason why they have obliged us hereunto by their Commands. They Command it because it is fittest in it *self* and best. And therefore are we required to love and wish well to all for their *own* sakes, because every man is in himself considered, and as abstracted from Vicious Habits, and from what is Preternatural, an Excellent, and therefore a Lovely Creature. Every man, as to his pure Naturals, bears God's Image; and consequently 'tis most reasonable to love every man, and desire his greatest happiness, for his *own* sake.

Nay, we ought to bear such a sort of Good-will to God's whole Creation; thus to love Brutes as well as Men, tho' in a far lower degree, and to desire for them all that Happiness their Natures are Capable of, *without* as well as *with* respect to our own Advantage, and the service they may do *us*. I say we ought to desire the well-being of all Creatures whatsoever, for their *own* sakes (I mean so far as it is consistent with the Well-being of Men) because all God's Works
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are good, and whatsoever is *so* hath a *Right* to our Benevolence as *such*. A mercifull man, saith R. Solomon, *Is merciful to his Beast*: And not only is he so, because by his ill usage of his Beast, he will disable him from being *serviceable* (for *this* would not speak one a *Merciful Man*, but a Man that considers his own interest) but because the poor Creature has a *Right* to good Usage. And if such a Love as this be due to Beasts, much more is it so to Man-kind.

By the way, what an ill-natured Principle is *that* of the Malmsbury Philosopher, *viz. That our Need of each other, is the only Cause of our entring into Societys, and the Ground of all Friendship*. He might judge so by *himself*, but every one whose Nature is not miserably *depraved*, knows by but reflecting on *himself*, that *this* is wretched Doctrine.

3. We are obliged to have such a degree of Love for one another, as will make us most Prompt and Ready to the Performance of all Offices of *Mercy* and *Kindness*, as shall be shewn presently: And so to love the *Souls* of our Brethren, as to be willing even to lay down our *Lives* for the procuring of their Eternal Happiness, if it be *necessary*. *Hereby*, saith S. John, *Perceive we the Love of God, because He laid down his Life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the Brethren*. And thus to
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love one another as Christ hath loved us, is not only to love our Neighbour as our selves, but even better than our Selves, that is, than *one* part of our selves, our *viler* part. And as *severe* as this may seem, nothing is more highly Reasonable, than that we should prefer our Brethrens Souls before our own Bodies; than that we should be more solicitous for their *Eternal*, than for our own *Temporal* life. This appears so Reasonable at first sight, that such a Man as *Tully*, had it come into his Mind, would certainly have asserted it to be our duty. This Love I might shew, *S. Paul* professed to have for his Unbelieving Country-Men, and he gave the greatest Demonstrations of the sincerity of that his Profession; and so did the *other* Apostles too of the *like* Love. And the *same* ought we *all* to aspire after.

Fifthly, I come, in the last place, to shew in what *Instances* our Love to one another ought to be expressed. Many I might lay before you, but I cannot insist on above *two* or *three*.

1. It ought to be Exprest by Sympathizing with each other in Afflictions, and Rejoicing in each others Prosperity. *Rejoice*, saith the Apostle, *with them that Rejoice, and Weep with them that Weep*. And look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Not that he would have us be Busy-bodies in other folks matters; *this* we

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are *elsewhere* Cautioned against by the *same* Apostle: But he would have us enquire after, and be affected with, the State of others; if it be *good* not to Envy them, but to be Glad for their sakes; and if *bad* to Compassionate them. *This* was the Temper of our Blessed Lord, when on Earth. We again and again read, that upon the sight of People in Calamity *ἐσπλαγχνισθὲν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς*, *His Bowels yerned towards them*. And *this* we must have a special care to be *like* Him in, as we profess to be His Followers. *Love as Brethren* (saith S. Peter) *be pitiful*. But then,

2. To our Affecting Sense of the Condition of others, we must add our Relief of all Objects of Pity, according to our Ability. And our Nature is indued with such a Passion as this of *Pity*, for this reason only, that we may be the more strongly thereby excited to *Relieve* our Afflicted Brethren; so that 'tis for *this* end that we ought to cherish this Affection. And to be affected with the sufferings of others, without administering what help we can, is so poor and low an expression of love, as to be of no Account *at all* with God. If a Brother or Sister (saith S. James) *be Naked and destitute of daily Food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in Peace, be ye warmed or filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the Body; what doth it profit?* That is, if you be so little Affected with the

Condition

Condition of your poor Indigent Brethren and Sisters, as only to bestow good *Wishes* on them, it will neither profit *them* nor *your selves*.

I will present you with *two* or *three* Texts, which if we will Consider, we cannot think our selves sincere Christians, while we live in the neglect of this duty of Charity. The *first* shall be that of S. John, *Whoso hath this Worlds Goods, and seeth his Brother hath need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* 1 John 3. 17. He hath no more love for God, than he hath for his Brother. The *second* shall be that of S. James, *Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction; and to keep ones self unspotted from the World,* James, 1. 27. The *third* shall be that of the Prophet Micah, *He hath shewed thee O man, what is Good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love Mercy, and to walk Humbly with thy God?* Mich. 6. 8. And so great a number of Texts of the like nature, may be produced, as you must needs be satisfied are more than enough, to overthrow all the Hopes of a Covetous Hard-hearted Professour of Christianity, let him have built his hopes upon never so many *other* Evidences.

3. Another Expression of Love to each other,
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should be wholesome Advice and Counsel. *As Oynment and Perfume* (says the Wise Man) *rejoice the heart, so does the sweetness of a mans Friend by hearty Counsel.* And if in our *Temporal* Concerns, the good Advice of a Friend is to be valued, How highly valuable is it in our *Spiritual*! And therefore, How much *more* should our Love prompt us to give it in *such* Concerns! *Exhort one another daily*, says the Apostle, *While it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works. Can I be a Friend to any man, and not be so to his *better* Part, his *Soul*? And can I be Friend to his *Soul*, and decline giving him that *Advice* which I am sensible he *needs*, either for the Taking him off from some sinful Course, or prevention of his falling into some Sin, or of his Continuance in the neglect of some necessary duty? And to encourage us to this great Instance of Friendship, let us consider those words with which *S. James* concludeth his Epistle, *Brethren, if any of you do Err from the truth, and one Convert him; let him know that he who Converteth a sinner from the Error of his way, shall save a Soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of Sins.* Or, this will be a prevailing Motive with Ced to pardon his *own* many sins.

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Charity as *this* is, and as great a Reward as is Promised to it, there is no duty more neglected in this *Luke-warm*, nay most *Prophane* Age; in which *such* an Expression of Friendship, too generally passeth for a Piece of *Fanaticism*. But Honest *Heathens* have had a much more honourable Opinion of it. And I will conclude *this* Argument with *this* saying of Cicero: *Consilia, Sermones, Cohortationes, Consolationes, interdum etiam Objurgationes, in Amicis vigent maxime. Good Counsel, wholesome Admonitions, Instructions and Consolations, and severe Reproofs too, when there is Occasion for them, do most take place in Friendship.*

I might proceed to *other* Instances of Love, to which we are necessarily obliged; As a *Readiness* to forgive offences: A *Forwardness* to make up differences. Putting the most *Candid* interpretations we reasonably can, upon each others *Actions*: Concealing each others *Faults*, except when it is necessary to make them *Publick*: And *Condescension* to each others *infirmities*. But I may not do more than Mention *these*, lest I trespass too much upon your *Patience*.

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The Application.

NOW what remaineth, but that we put in practice with all our might, this Great, this New Commandment of *loving one another, as Christ hath loved us*. And we of *this Society*, who are many of us *Clergy-men*, and all *Sons* of the Clergy, are in these respects under a special Obligation, of Excelling in *this*, with all *other* Christian Virtues.

Those of us who are *Clergy-men* are strictly bound, as *S. Paul* tells us, in the Person of *Timothy*, to be *Examples to the Flock*; and so to demean our selves, in all respects, as to be able to say as *that* Apostle did, *Walk as ye have us for an Example*. As it is our great Business to Teach others their duty, and to press them thereto by the most persuasive Arguments, so must we make great Conscience of it our selves, as we would not *lose* our labour; nay as we would not do more *hurt* than *good*. And those ought to Expect, at *least* to have their labour lost upon their People, whose Examples do not back and inforce their Doctrine. If we are not such *our selves*, as we tell *them*, as they hope to be saved, *they* must be, each of them will be ready to make this shameful Reflexion, upon our Sermons and good Admonitions, *Cur verba audio, cum facta non videam*?

And

And particularly, as to this duty of *loving one another*, it will be in vain to use Arguments with our Flocks to stir them up hereunto, while they perceive us wanting in any of the Necessary instances and Expressions of Love : I mean *such* as are within our own power.

And I say *this*, because a Multitude of our Clergy are, God knows, in very sorry Circumstances to be Exemplary, in that great Expression of Love, *Alms-giving*. I much doubt, that the far *greater* Part have not wherewith to be so. Nay 'twould pity any good Man to see, how many of them are reduced to such Streights (especially of late years) as to want a Competent Subsistence for themselves and Families. And 'tis very sad to Observe what Contempt is by this means brought upon their Holy, their Honourable Function. *Necessitas cogit ad turpia.*

And this puts me in mind to wish, that the Condition of the Clergy were better Considered, in the *Taxes* and *other* impositions, than it lately hath been.

What I have now suggested, I am too well Confirmed in the belief of, by the sad Informations I have received, and Observations I have made, up and down in my own *Diocese*: Which yet, I think, is not the poorest in the Nation.

In the next place, I would mind you, my Brethren,



thren, not only that the *Clergy*, as *such*, are most concerned of all Persons, to be Exemplary in the Virtue of the *Text*, and *all other*, but the *Sons* too of the *Clergy* are in an Especial manner obliged here to, upon the account of their coming out of the Loyns of *such Parents*, and their having generally had so Religious Educations, as they are to be supposed to have.

Next to the Faults of the *Clergy*, those of their *Children* are exceeding Scandalous; Nothing being more common, than for Prophane People, and such as catch at all Opportunities, to cast Dirt upon our Excellent Religion and Church, to charge the Sins of such upon their Parents *loose* Education of them. Nor is any thing more Ordinary, than for People to Encourage themselves to do Evil, by the bad Examples of the *Children* of their Teachers, as well as of their Teachers themselves. These *two* things, it is likely, the Apostle had a Special regard to, in making it a necessary Qualification of an Elder, to have *faithful Children*, *not accused of Riot, or unruly*, as well as to be *blameless himself*, and the *Husband of one Wife*; Titus 1. 6.

But in reference to this duty of *Love*, I will repeat what I now said, *viz.* What remains, but that we Endeavour to practise it with all our might. That *All bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from us, with all malice.*

And

And that we be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another; Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us: According to the earnest Advice of the Apostle, *Eph. 4. 31, 32.* That we be kindly Affectioned one to another, notwithstanding any differences of Opinion, with Brotherly love in Honour preferring one another; As the same Apostle Exhorts, *Rom. 12. 10.* Oh how many pressing and powerful Motives to this duty of Love, *Universal Love, Catholick Charity*, doth the New Testament, and Natural Reason too, present us with!

But I will now only Observe to you, that what *Nerves* and *Sinues*, are to our *Natural Bodies*, that is *Love* in all *Bodies Politick*, 'Tis *Love*, above all things, which Cements and holds together Societies and Communities. And therefore another short and sad Digression is here too Seasonable, viz. 'Tis a Wonderfull thing, that this Church and Kingdom should not long since have been utterly Broken to pieces, as they hath both been miserably shattered, by means of our most *Unchristian*, and indeed *Inhumane Breaches*; by means of our having so banished Love: Not only *Christian*, but *Natural Love*, in a very great measure: Not only *Universal Love*, but Love to one another, taking that Phrase in the most restrained Sense. We should

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before *now* have been Wofull Examples of the Truth of that observation of our Blessed Saviour, *A City or Kingdom, divided against it self cannot stand, but is brought to Desolation*, had it not been prevented by a *Series*, a long *Train* of such Providences, as have scarcely been *much* short of Miracles.

Desolation is the Natural Consequent of great Divisions, of Divisions not *greater* than *Ours* have long been. If ye bite and devour each other, take heed ye be not Consumed one of another, said S. Paul to the divided Galatians, ch. 5. 15. But especially is it so, as Divisions give a mighty Advantage to a Common Enemy. And therefore nothing can hinder their producing this Effect, but a Θεός ἀπομνηστὴς, signal interpositions of the Divine Providence : Which I say, & you need not be told it, we have from time to time had, Oh what a History of *such* Interpositions have these *five* last years given us! And never had we a more Eminent one, than this *last* Spring. But what a Dangerous Condition are *those* People in, who have little to Encourage their hopes with, but the Continuance of Extraordinary Providences! And especially when they have no other Reason still to Expect them, but because they have had so *many* of them.

But, alas, we of *all* People have the *least* cause still to depend upon them, because no *Visible* good Effect upon us, hath been produced by them ; We *will* not be

be Reformed in any *One* instance. And *particularly*, we will still Obstinate^{ly} persevere in our Old *Enmity to one another*, which daily *Encrease*th too instead of *abating*, Let *God Almighty* do what He will, and a *Formidable Enemy* do what he can, to make us Friends. But I must not lengthen out any father so Melancholy a Digression, since we are now met upon so Pleasant an Occasion.

And therefore I add, that *Love* is the main thing, that makes such *Meetings as these*, and our *Eating and Drinking together*, a true Pleasure. Better, saith King Solomon, is a *Dinner of green Herbs, where love is, than a Stalled Ox, and Hatred therewith*.

And as *Love* makes Meetings of this nature, very pleasant Diversions, so the professed Design of them being to *Encrease* Friendship, and to Express Love by shewing *Mercy*, it makes them highly *Commendable* and *Praise-worthy*.

And of *All* Works of Mercy there is no one more Acceptable to our Heavenly Father and Blessed Saviour, as is Evident from what hath been said, than that of Comforting *distressed Widows*, and making their *Hearts to sing for joy*; and Taking Care of poor *Orphans*, and Enabling them to live Comfortably and usefully in the World.

And the Relief of the poor Widows of *Clergy men*, and providing for their helpless Children, being the onely Design of our being *Incorporated*, let *their* Names be had in *Everlasting Remembrance*, who first set on foot this Noble Project; and, next to *them*, *theirs*, who have chiefly Contributed to the Encouragement of it!

And the *Latter* of these Charities, *viz.* That which relates to the poor *Children* of deceased Ministers, being the Special Design of these Annual Assemblies, may *This* at least *Equalize* each of the *former* ones, in this Excellent Work!

Our *Courts of Assistants*, and *Stewards of these Feasts*, have ever been made too sensible of what I but now observ'd, of the miserably streight Circumstances of Abundance of our Clergy, by the Vast Number of their Widows and Children, whose deplorable Condition is, year after year, laid before them. And tho' the Bounty which Worthy persons have from time to time deposited in our *Treasurers* hands, be very Considerable, yet 'tis grievous to see how *little* falls to the Share of particular Suppliants, by reason of their Excessive Number.

Nor is the *Parade*, which makes such a noble
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shew on *these days*, in our Streets, any Objection against what I have sadly observed to you; since it would be very strange, if so many Thousands of Ministers as our Church consists of, should not *always* produce a very great Number, whose Natural parts, and Liberal Educations, have Enabled them, to improve the Advantages put into their hands by the Good providence of God, to the Arriving at very plentiful Fortunes. And, upon a just Computation, I doubt not ~~but~~ it will be found, That there are Extremely Few of the Sons of the Clergy, whose large Circumstances in the World are owing to their *Patrimony*, in Comparison of *those* who are enriched, by the Blessing of God, upon their *own* Industry.

I hope I need not tell *such*, how much they are Obliged in Gratitude to their Great Benefactor, for making such a difference between *them*, and *most* of their Brethren, To be Liberal in their Contributions towards the Relief of the *Necessitous* part of them.

And this is the most Effectual Course you can possibly take, to secure Gods Blessing to *your* Posterity; and to prevent their Ever Coming into the Number of Petitioners for Charity.

And,

And, which is a far greater Consideration, being Compassionate towards *Widows* and the *Fatherless* is such a sort of Charity, as will make those who are in love with it, the Happy Objects of Gods Special Love. *Be as a Father to the Fatherless, saith the Son of Syrach, and instead of an Husband unto their Mother ; so shalt thou be as the Son of the most High, and He shall love thee more than thy Mother doth.*

THE END.
